REMARKS

Claims 1, 8, 9, 11, 12, 14, 15, 23, 24, 26, 28 and 29 were objected to because of informalities. Claims 1, 8, 9, 13, 15, 16, 23, 24, 26, and 28 have been amended to correct informalities. Independent claims 1 and 15 were rejected 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent 6,985,490 (Czeiger).

Figure 2 of Czeiger shows two Fibre Channel Storage Area Networks or "SAN A" 22 and "SAN B" 42. The SAN A 22 includes a plurality of clients 24, switches 27, and a "gateway" 26. As described in column 6 lines 1-5, the gateway 26 is a "FC switch of SAN A". SAN B also includes a plurality of clients 44, switches 45, and a gateway 46. As described in column 6 lines 40-45, the gateway 46 also operates as a FC switch. The two gateways or switches 26 and 46 are connected to each other by a coupling 54. In various embodiments of Czeiger, the coupling 54 is either a fiber optic or electronic connection using a communication protocol, such as Ethernet, SONET, ATM, or SDH, to allow the two gateways 26 and 46 to communicate with one another. See column 6 lines 50-60.

However, Czeiger does not teach or suggest any mechanism "configured to enable communication between the first set of end devices in the first fabric with the second set of end devices associated with the second fabric while maintaining the unique Domain_ID addresses of the first set of end devices and the second set of end devices." Czeiger is believed to use a conventional address translation mechanism described in the Background section of the present application and does not maintain Domain_ID addresses. "One problem with this approach is that the border Switches between the VSANs perform FC_ID translations (i.e., Network Address translations or NATs) for the source and destination end devices. If a border Switch goes down, an alternative or fail-over path needs to be created. In addition, with certain frames, both the source and/or destination FC_IDs may be defined in the payload. A mechanism that identifies and translates these IDs must therefore be provided. This solution also does not work if encryption or a proprietary protocol is used between the source and destination end devices because there is no way for the border Switches to process the proprietary payloads or de-crypt the frames to identify the source and destination FC_IDs." (Specification [0011])

In fact, Czeiger explicitly includes translation tables 47 and 31 for translating addresses. By translating addresses, the Domain_ID is not maintained for communications between two fabrics as explicitly recited in the claims. Czeiger appears to require translating a local address in a first network to a global address and then translating the global address to a local address in a second network. Although Czeiger does not expressly mention or describe any Domain_ID,

the address translation scheme of would modify instead of maintain the Domain_ID for communications across fabrics, as the Domain_ID would be mapped to a local address in Czeiger.

Consequently, the claims are believed allowable. However, to facilitate prosecution, claims 1 and 15 have been amended to recite sending frames "including Fabric Shortest Path First (FSPF) frames" from the first fabric to the second fabric. According to various embodiments, FSPF frames are one of the mechanisms that allow maintenance of a Domain_ID for transmissions across different Fabrics. This amendment is believed to be fully supported by the original claims and the specification and does not require any new search. For example, the amendment is supported in the originally filed claims and the specification. For example, claims 9 and 24 state the Border Switch is further configured to exchange Fabric Shortest Path First (FSPF) information between neighboring Switches in each fabric. Czeiger does not teach or suggest sending frames including FSPF frames across a Border Switch. In fact, Czeiger does not mention any FSPF frames at all. It is theoretically possible that Czeiger transfers FSPF frames across Border Switches, but this is not taught or suggested and can not be assumed. It is believed that if Czeiger has any FSPF frames at all, it only transfers FSPF frames within a fabric. FSPF frames are not believed to be transferred across different fabrics as recited in the independent claims.

In light of the above remarks, the rejections to the independent claims are believed overcome for at least the reasons noted above. Applicants' Representative believes that all pending claims are allowable in their present form. If the Examiner has any questions or concerns for Applicants' Representative, the Examiner is encouraged to contact her at the number provided below.

Respectfully submitted,
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